

PART 301-51-PAYING TRAVEL EXPENSES**Subpart A-General**

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301-51.1(a) What is the preferred method to procure common carrier transportation?

The preferred method to procure common carrier transportation is a centrally-billed account at a Travel Management Center (TMC). You must follow the requirements of *Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)*, 301-10.106(a) - (c) in emergency situations when the Citibank Government travel card is used to procure common carrier transportation. In order to receive full reimbursement, employees are required to annotate the complete account number on the passenger receipt when using the individual Government Citibank travel card to purchase e-tickets.

301-51.1(b) How do I pay charges associated with converting foreign currency at an embassy abroad?

You are required to use your Government Citibank travel card to pay charges for converting foreign currency at an embassy abroad. Failure to use your Government Citibank travel card will result in the loss of necessary accounting information which will correctly identify the organization to be charged.

301-51.2(a) What classes of employees are exempt from the mandatory use of the Citibank Government travel card?

In addition to the classes of employees exempted in the FTR, and in the Department of Commerce (DOC) Travel Handbook from the mandatory use of the travel charge card, NOAA exempts employees who have a disability that would either limit or prevent them from using a Government Citibank travel card.

Memoranda of request for exemptions from the mandatory use of the Citibank Government travel card for employees with a disability:

- 1) must be substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority;
- 2) must be signed by the Assistant Administrator, Line Office or Director, Staff Office; and
- 3) will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis by the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller.

301-51.3(a) Who has the authority to request exemptions from the mandatory use of the Citibank Government travel card?

Memoranda of request for exemptions from the mandatory use of the Citibank Government travel card must be signed by the Assistant Administrator, Line Office or Director, Staff Office, and be submitted thru the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller, to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The CFO will forward requests to the DOC Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration for approval. DOC must report all exemptions to General Services Administration (GSA).

301-51.5 How may I pay for official travel expenses if I receive an exemption from the use of the Citibank Government travel card?

When you receive an exemption from the use of the Government Citibank travel card, you are still expected to procure common carrier transportation on the centrally-billed account within a TMC, and use one of the following methods to pay all other official travel expenses:

(a) Personal funds will be used to pay for official travel expenses for:

- Employees who travel once a year;
- Employees whose travel cards have been canceled because of delinquency or use for non-official purposes; or
- Intermittent, seasonal, or temporary employees who have limited appointments.

NOTE: Travel advances will not be authorized for employees mentioned in 301-51.5(a).

(b) Travel advances are authorized to pay for official travel expenses for:

- Individuals traveling on invitational travel. Invitational travelers are entitled to receive travel advances limited to 80% of the estimated cash expenses of the travel order. Users of Travel Manager will refer to the total advance amount in Block 6 of the Travel Manager authorization default form; or
- Employees with disabilities who were granted an exemption, and new appointees who have to travel with less than 24-hours notice and have not had an opportunity to obtain a Citibank Government travel card. A travel advance form and memoranda of request should be faxed to the Chief, Travel and Purchases Branch, Finance Office, or the Chief, Financial Management Division, of your servicing finance office. In addition, the original travel advance form should be mailed to the servicing finance office for proper documentation.

NOTE: Under emergency circumstances, Citibank Government travel cards can be obtained within 48 hours for NOAA employees.

301-51.8 How does the NOAA office inviting the invitational traveler obtain travel advances?

The NOAA office inviting the invitational traveler can obtain travel advances as follows:

- (a) under non-emergency circumstances, the NOAA office will submit a travel advance to the servicing finance office. The travel advance will be deposited directly to the traveler's bank account within 2 - 3 days (notify your servicing finance office for direct deposit set-up); or
- (b) under emergency circumstances, the NOAA office will submit a travel advance to the servicing imprest cashier. The NOAA office will receive cash to fund the traveler's trip. Note: Imprest funds are no longer available in most areas. Check with your servicing finance office for the availability of an imprest fund.

301-51.9 Who do I contact to apply for a Citibank Government travel card?

- (a) All Line and Staff Offices, other than NMFS and NWS, will call LeVon Washington on (301) 413-3060,
- (b) NMFS employees will call Christine Lowe on (301) 713-0155, and
- (c) NWS employees will call Marilyn Land on (301) 713-0420.